United Nations A/C.1/55/PV.18

General Assembly
Fifty-fifth session

Official Records

First Committee
18th meeting
Thursday, 19 October 2000, 10 am
New York

Chairman: U Mya Than (Myanmar)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda items 65 to 81 (*continued*)

Thematic discussion on item subjects; introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and international security items

Mr. Du Preez (South Africa): It is a pleasure for my delegation to introduce five draft resolutions on behalf of the member States of the Non-Aligned Movement. These draft resolutions will be considered under agenda items 73 and 74.

First, I should like to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.20, entitled "Measures to uphold the authority of the 1925 Geneva Protocol". The draft resolution recalls the long-standing determination of the international community to ban chemical and biological weapons. It welcomes initiatives taken by some States parties to the 1925 Geneva Protocol to withdraw their reservations. It also renews the General Assembly's previous call to observe strictly the principles, objectives and provisions of that treaty, and it calls upon those States that continue to maintain reservations to withdraw them. We trust that this draft resolution will again be adopted with the widest possible support.

The draft resolution entitled "Observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament and arms control" is contained in document A/C.1/55/L.21. The fundamental objective of this draft resolution is to ensure compliance with relevant environmental norms when negotiating and implementing treaties and agreements relevant to disarmament. The international community has long been aware of the detrimental consequences of uncontrolled radioactive sources and the risks associated with military activities involving nuclear materials. The dismantling of certain categories of weapons requires techniques and methods that would sustain and augment the prevailing environmental standards. While the draft resolution does not make any reference to specific disarmament agreements, it nonetheless calls upon States to take fully into account the relevant environmental norms while negotiating arms control and disarmament treaties and agreements. It also calls for the application of the advances made in science and technology to enhance security and facilitate disarmament without adverse impact on the environment or to its effective contribution to attaining sustainable development. We remain hopeful that the draft resolution will be adopted with the widest possible support.

Draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.22, entitled "Relationship between disarmament and development", underlines the importance of reallocating valuable resources released as the result of disarmament for development purposes, thereby reducing the gap between the developed and developing countries. That relationship has gained momentum and indeed become relevant against the backdrop of the diversion of a large proportion of financial, material and technological resources to armaments, which has

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placed a heavy burden on the economies of many States, especially developing countries.

The stark contrast between expenditures for armaments and the paucity of aid for socio-economic progress is also self-evident. The draft resolution acknowledges the actions taken in the context of the Final Document adopted by the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development and calls upon the high-level Steering Committee on Disarmament and Development to strengthen and enhance its programme of activities, in accordance with the mandate adopted at the Conference. It also calls on the international community to devote part of the resources made available through the implementation of disarmament and arms limitation agreements to economic and social development. The draft resolution requests the Secretary-General to continue to take action for the implementation of the action programme adopted at the International Conference. The sponsors trust that this draft resolution will again be adopted without a vote.

As delegations are aware, at its fifty-fourth session the General Assembly adopted by consensus the resolution entitled "Convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament". Despite the fact that at its 1999 session the Disarmament Commission could not reach consensus on the objectives and agenda for a fourth special session of the Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD IV), members of the Non-Aligned Movement and other members of the international community continue to believe that the convening of an SSOD IV would offer an opportunity to review, from a perspective more in tune with the current international situation, the most critical aspects of the process of disarmament and to mobilize the international community and public opinion in favour of the elimination of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction and of the control and reduction of conventional weapons.

Despite the current disagreement over its objectives and agenda, we continue to believe that a special session could still be held provided there is a strong political commitment by all Member States to use such a session to review the state of affairs in the entire field of disarmament and arms control in the post-cold-war era. However, we remain concerned over the lack of progress in this regard despite renewed attempts to establish another mechanism through which consensus on the objectives, agenda and timing of such a special session could be reached. As was the case with the resolution adopted without a vote at the fifty-fourth session, draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.23 calls for further steps that would lead to the convening of the fourth special session with the participation of all Member States, subject to the emergence of a consensus on its objectives and agenda. It is for this reason that the sponsors of the draft resolution continue to believe that agreement to convene the special session could be facilitated through continued consultations by the Secretary-General.

Because the only substantive change from the resolution adopted at the fifty-fourth session is the inclusion of a new preambular paragraph that welcomes the Secretary-General's report on his consultations with Member States, the sponsors believe that the draft resolution could again be adopted without a vote.

Finally, I wish to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.24, entitled "United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament". This draft resolution underlines the importance of all regional centres as mechanisms to inform, educate and generate public understanding and support in the field of arms control and disarmament. The draft resolution supports the activities of the three regional centres in Nepal, Peru and Togo, and emphasizes the valuable contribution of these centres towards changing basic attitudes to peace and security. The draft resolution also requests Member States in each of these regions and those in a position to do so, as well as international governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, and foundations, to make voluntary contributions to the three regional centres so as to enable them to fulfil their role and to enhance their programmes and activities. It is the hope of the sponsors that the draft resolution will again be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Khairat (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): The delegation of Egypt has the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.25, entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space", under agenda item 72, on behalf of Algeria, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Chile, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kenya, Kuwait, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Sudan and Egypt.

Year after year the delegation of Egypt prepares a draft resolution on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, alternating with Sri Lanka, which has a great record of contributions on this subject in the Conference on Disarmament. Recognizing the common interest of all mankind in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes, the draft resolution stresses that the growing use of outer space increases the need for greater transparency and better information on the part of the international community. On that basis the draft resolution emphasizes the necessity of further measures with appropriate and effective provisions for verification to prevent an arms race in outer space, and calls upon all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, to contribute actively to the objective of the peaceful use of outer space and to refrain from actions contrary to the objective of preventing an arms race in outer space.

The draft resolution, which we submit annually, emphasizes the need to take more measures to ensure the prevention of an arms race in outer space through the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Conference on Disarmament in the year 2001. We believe that that committee is the true place for dealing with this subject, as negotiations for the conclusion of an international agreement to prevent an arms race in outer space remain its priority task.

The draft resolution last year was adopted as resolution 54/53 by a big majority — 162 to none. With this indication of our good intentions and willingness to reach a resolution to re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space in Geneva, we hope that this draft resolution will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Thapa (Nepal): My delegation has the honour to introduce a draft resolution under agenda item 74 (c), entitled "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, document A/C.1/55/L.33, on behalf of the following sponsors: Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Thailand, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam and my own delegation, Nepal.

The General Assembly, while recalling its resolutions 42/39 D of 30 November 1987 and 44/117 F of 15 December 1989, would commend the useful activities carried out by the Regional Centre in fulfilling its mandate. Similarly, the Assembly would express its appreciation to the Regional Centre for organizing the annual disarmament meeting in Kathmandu and other related meetings in Akita and Jakarta. In one of its operative paragraphs the Assembly would reaffirm its strong support for the further strengthening of the Regional Centre and would also underscore the implementation of the Kathmandu process as a powerful vehicle for the development of the practice of region-wide security and disarmament dialogue.

While expressing appreciation for continuing political support and financial contributions to the Regional Centre, the General Assembly would reiterate its appeal to Member States, as well as international governmental and non-governmental organizations and foundations, to make voluntary contributions to it. Furthermore, in operative paragraph 6 — which is an additional paragraph this year in view of the present reality — the Assembly would appreciate the generous offer of His Majesty's Government of Nepal to bear the operational cost of the centre for it to function from Kathmandu.

In accordance with these facts, the General Assembly in operative paragraph 7 of the draft resolution would request the Secretary-General to expedite his ongoing consultations with other concerned Member States and interested organizations and urge him to conclude them by 31 July 2001 in order to assess the possibility of enabling the physical operation of the Centre from Kathmandu as soon as possible. It is the sincere wish of my delegation that the draft resolution be adopted by consensus as has been the case in previous years.

While I have the floor may I make a correction to the draft resolution. On page 2, in operative paragraph 4, the second line should read "as well as to international governmental and non-governmental organizations" instead of "government and non-government organizations". These corrections should be reflected in the draft resolution.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): My delegation has the honour to introduce to the Committee a draft resolution entitled "Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*", document A/C.1/55/L.48, dated 13 October 2000. We are pleased

to announce that the draft resolution is sponsored by the following delegations, namely, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Egypt, Fiji, Ghana, Guyana, Honduras, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Thailand, Viet Nam, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and my own delegation, Malaysia. My delegation expresses its gratitude to all the sponsors.

The draft resolution is an updated version of the resolution adopted at the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly. Fourteen of its preambular paragraphs and the four operative paragraphs are virtually identical with resolution 54/54 Q of 1 December 1999. However, a new element has been introduced as the sixth preambular paragraph, which reads:

> "*Welcoming* the unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament".

For the sake of brevity I will focus only on the operative paragraphs of the draft resolution. In operative paragraph 1 the Assembly

> "*Underlines once again* the unanimous conclusion of the International Court of Justice that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control".

Operative paragraph 2

> "*Calls once again upon* all States immediately to fulfil that obligation by commencing multilateral negotiations in 2001 leading to an early conclusion of a nuclear weapons convention prohibiting the development, production, testing, deployment, stockpiling, transfer, threat or use of nuclear weapons and providing for their elimination".

Operative paragraph 3

> "*Requests* all States to inform the Secretary-General of the efforts and measures they have taken on the implementation of the present resolution and nuclear disarmament, and requests the Secretary-General to apprise the General Assembly of that information at its [fifty-sixth] session".

In operative paragraph 4 the Assembly decides to include this issue in the provisional agenda of its fifty-sixth session.

It is clear from the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice that States have a legal obligation not only to pursue in good faith but also to bring to an early conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects. That is consistent with the solemn obligation made by States parties under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to pursue in good faith negotiations on effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament and with their determined pursuit of systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally, with the ultimate goal of the elimination of those weapons, as well as with the recently announced unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament. The sponsors of the draft resolution consider the unanimous opinion of the world court on the existence of this obligation to be a clear basis for follow-up actions by Members of the Organization in their determined efforts to rid the world of nuclear weapons.

In introducing the draft resolution on behalf of its sponsors, I should like to stress a number of important points. First, in calling upon all States to commence multilateral negotiations leading to an early conclusion of a nuclear weapons convention, the draft resolution does not envisage the commencement of immediate negotiations on the convention itself but rather on negotiations on nuclear disarmament leading to the conclusion of such a convention. It thereby allows for the very same kinds of disarmament measures that the nuclear-weapon States themselves have unequivocally undertaken to accomplish. Therefore, the approach called for in the draft resolution is both realistic and credible and compatible with the incremental approaches suggested by others.

Secondly, we are fully cognizant of the fact that negotiations on nuclear disarmament need to move forward in an incremental or progressive fashion. We

commend the approaches taken by some countries towards that end outside the Conference on Disarmament, either through bilateral agreements or arrangements, or through unilateral decisions. However, we cannot but express disappointment at the painstakingly slow progress in these endeavours. START II is yet to be ratified, almost eight years after it was signed, and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is yet to come into force because a number of States have yet to sign and ratify it. While my delegation recognizes the importance and continued relevance of bilateral negotiations and unilateral decisions, they should not detract from the importance of multilateral negotiations. These two tracks complement and reinforce each other.

Thirdly, the draft resolution deliberately focuses on the unanimous opinion of the judges of the International Court of Justice on the existence of an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. It does so in order to avoid confusion between the Court's two main conclusions, namely, the threat and use of nuclear weapons, and the obligation to negotiate on nuclear disarmament. They obviously require different responses. The draft resolution, as reflected in operative paragraph 1, focuses on the disarmament obligations of States, as that was a conclusion arrived at unanimously by the International Court of Justice. Its implementation is entirely appropriate for the General Assembly, which has a mandate to promote disarmament negotiations. The sponsors of the draft resolution recognize the value of the Court's decision as a whole. The draft resolution does not pretend that operative paragraph 1 concerns the only conclusion of the Court that could influence disarmament policy, or that there are no other actions that could be taken in light of the Court's opinion. In fact, operative paragraph 3, in which all States are requested to inform the Secretary-General of the efforts and measures they have taken to fulfil their duties as underlined by the conclusions of the Court, encompasses the Court's decision as a whole.

Fourthly, the draft resolution calls upon all States to fulfil the obligation to negotiate nuclear disarmament. It does not relieve non-nuclear-weapon States of any disarmament responsibility or in any way single out nuclear-weapon States as the sole bearers of responsibility for nuclear disarmament.

Fifthly, the draft resolution does not remove the obligation under article VI of the NPT in relation to general and complete disarmament. The Court, in arriving at its conclusion, relied on international law, of which article VI of the NPT is a part, as well as other disarmament instruments and customary international law. The Court's conclusion that there is an obligation to negotiate nuclear disarmament made no linkage at all between such an obligation and general and complete disarmament, nor does the NPT make a direct link to that effect. It merely states that there is an obligation to do both.

Finally, on the draft resolution's silence on the Court's conclusion that there was not in international law a prohibition against the threat or use of nuclear weapons, the Court had in fact rejected that argument by stating that there would not be legal uses of nuclear weapons, and it emphasized that it could reach no definitive position under extreme circumstances. Further, it stressed that States must never make civilians the object of attack and consequently must never use weapons that are incapable of distinguishing between civilian and military targets — and nuclear weapons are obviously incapable of so doing.

The Court's unanimous opinion that States have the obligation not only to conduct but also to successfully conclude negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament clearly reiterates the obligation of the States parties to the NPT. The unanimous decision of the International Court of Justice, representing the full weight of the legal opinion of all members of the world court, is an important contribution to the development of international law which should not be summarily dismissed. The fact that the nuclear-weapon States have ignored this unanimous opinion and failed to pursue multilateral negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament has had a negative impact on the efforts of the international community towards that end.

The sponsors of the draft resolution regard the 8 July 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons* as an important and historic decision in the field of nuclear disarmament. It should be given due recognition and followed up. In submitting this draft resolution for the consideration of Member States, the sponsors are confident that it will continue to receive the support of a large majority of Members of the Organization. We are confident that States supporting multilateral negotiations eventually leading

to the global elimination of nuclear weapons — as we are all committed to accomplish — will have no reason to oppose the draft resolution that seeks to do exactly that in the long term. Once again, in introducing the draft resolution, my delegation expresses its appreciation to the sponsors as well as to delegations that will vote in its favour.

Mr. Sood (India): My delegation has sought the floor to introduce the draft resolution entitled "Reducing nuclear danger", document A/C.1/55/L.32, under agenda item 73 (m), and sponsored by Bhutan, Costa Rica, Fiji, Kenya, Mauritius, Sudan, Zambia, Zimbabwe and my own delegation, India.

The delegation of India has highlighted in the First Committee the fact that with the end of the cold war a decade ago there is absolutely no justification for maintaining thousands of nuclear weapons in a state of hair-trigger alert, creating unacceptable risks of unintentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons. This could have catastrophic consequences for all humankind. Therefore, India took the initiative to introduce the resolution on reducing nuclear danger two years ago and is gratified that it has received widespread support in the General Assembly.

The draft resolution puts forward a modest and practical proposal calling for a review of nuclear doctrines and, in this context, for immediate and urgent steps to reduce the risk of unintentional and accidental use of nuclear weapons. Many nuclear-weapon States and their allies have opposed the resolution on grounds that a number of technical aspects were involved. While acknowledging the technical complexities, we believe that they can be overcome through the necessary political commitment.

It is accepted that the elimination of nuclear weapons under a non-discriminatory and multilaterally verifiable treaty requires complex negotiations. However, that is no justification for these weapons to be maintained in a state of high alert, creating the risks that I have referred to. It is imperative that even as we work towards developing the requisite political will, in the interim the international community accepts the need for urgent practical steps that will diminish nuclear dangers. The danger is a clear and present danger. It is a fact that there have been several instances of accidental near launches, often triggered by incomplete or inaccurate assessments of available information. These events demonstrate the error-prone character of maintaining large arsenals in a state of high alert.

A number of programmes and measures to achieve global nuclear disarmament have been put forward by States, eminent individuals and non-governmental organizations, and all of them also attribute a high priority to steps that reduce the risk of unintentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons. The Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons identified the first step as "taking nuclear forces off alert". A special statement by the Pugwash Conferences on the impasse in nuclear disarmament made a similar call. Non-governmental organizations such as Friends of the Earth, Union of Concerned Scientists, Coalition to Reduce Nuclear Dangers, Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy, the Stimson Centre and the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW), have also called for removing the hair-trigger posture of nuclear forces. The Tokyo Forum report of 1999 recognized the importance of moving in the direction of reducing the alert status of nuclear forces.

Most important, in March 2000, a few months ago, the Secretary-General, in his report to the Millennium Assembly, proposed the convening of a major international conference that would help to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers in order to help focus attention on the risks posed by the hair-trigger alert of thousands of deployed nuclear weapons. The Declaration adopted at the United Nations Millennium Summit on 8 September also resolved to convene an international conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers. Encouraged by this endorsement at the highest level, we therefore propose to reintroduce the resolution this year. In response to last year's resolution, the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters prepared an interim report which was submitted to the Secretary-General, document A/55/324, which mentions the need for the Board to continue its discussions on the subject. Accordingly, the draft resolution this year requests the Secretary-General to continue to seek inputs from the Advisory Board on information with regard to specific measures that would significantly reduce the risk of nuclear war, including the proposal contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration for convening an international conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers.

In order to make the resolution as widely acceptable as possible, we have attempted to keep it simple, topical, contemporary and free from references to contentious issues. We believe that the draft resolution, entitled "Reducing nuclear danger", advocates a desirable objective, and we hope that it will receive the widest possible support in the Committee.

Ms. Pereira (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the countries of the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR) — Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay — and of Bolivia and Chile in relation to the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. The Political Declaration signed by the Presidents of the six countries at the Ushuaia Summit in Argentina on 24 July 1998 declares the region to be a zone of peace free from weapons of mass destruction, committing our States to take all necessary measures to ensure that MERCOSUR, Bolivia and Chile become a zone free from anti-personnel mines.

We recall that in the context of the complementary efforts that have been undertaken, our region is working towards becoming the first on the planet to be declared a region free of this scourge. That aim has already been established by the Organization of American States (OAS) in resolutions, since 1996 declaring the western hemisphere to be a zone free of anti-personnel landmines. That is why all the countries of this area must make every effort, as a top priority, to eliminate the danger of anti-personnel landmines from our region. The implementation of the Ottawa Convention and its worldwide application is an essential task in the ambitious programme being developed to expand the work. We make a commitment to undertake all efforts to enhance this. We are satisfied that Colombia ratified the Convention on 6 September last.

Unfortunately, the use of millions of mines affects all regions of the world. The removal of mines continues to be one of the most important challenges in the process of rebuilding societies in their post-conflict phase. That is why the Convention makes a very significant contribution, as it is the expression of a consensus of the international community to achieve the total prohibition of these artifacts which are contrary to international humanitarian law.

In Maputo the States parties, meeting for the first time, decided to continue efforts to make sure that the verification and implementation of measures to eradicate anti-personnel landmines should be as effective as expected under the Convention. We would like to say that positive results were achieved at the Second Meeting of the States Parties, held in Geneva last September. MERCOSUR, Bolivia and Chile are pleased to accept the offer made by the Government of Nicaragua to hold the Third Meeting in Managua. In this respect we wish to highlight the importance of the contribution of the countries of the region to inter-American demining activities through the Mine Clearance Assistance Mission in Central America (MARMINCA), which benefits Honduras, Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Guatemala.

The most lamentable effects continue to be seen in children and women who die or are mutilated as a result of this hidden weapon, a weapon with indiscriminate action and which does not respect any armistice, nor does it have the capacity to respect a ceasefire. In the study on the impact of armed conflicts on children, special attention is paid to the devastating long-term effects of these weapons of mass destruction. We are taking every step to ensure that cooperation in demining and assistance to victims is done in a manner which is in accordance with the negotiations in Oslo and under the Convention, in order to cover the fundamental aspects related to alleviating the suffering of populations and opening the way for their development. The United Nations has been focusing on this theme for a number of years, for example, the discussions in the Security Council on demining in the context of peacekeeping operations.

We are convinced that the essential aspect of the activities aimed at removing these anti-personnel landmines is the involvement of people and the creation of a safe environment to provide non-threatening conditions for health and social development. That is why the countries of MERCOSUR, Bolivia and Chile should try, within the scope of their responsibilities, to contribute to solving the problems caused by anti-personnel mines. With this in mind, on 6 and 7 November next a regional seminar on the destruction of mines will be held in Buenos Aires. The seminar is organized by Argentina and Canada with the participation of the OAS and the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, headquartered in Lima, to establish a discussion forum

to reflect on the whole process of destroying stockpiled mines and the experience obtained in that task.

Mr. Enkhsaikhan (Mongolia): Under agenda item 73 (c) I wish to introduce the draft resolution entitled "Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status", document A/C.1/55/L.40. The draft is based on General Assembly resolution 53/77 D, adopted by consensus in 1998. Therefore many of the provisions of the present text faithfully reproduce the provisions of that resolution.

The draft also has some new elements that reflect events and the measures that have been taken in implementation of resolution 53/77 D in the past two years. Thus, the seventh preambular paragraph recalls that the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons welcomed Mongolia's initiative. Operative paragraph 2 takes note of the adoption by the Mongolian Government of legislation on its nuclear-weapon-free status as a concrete step towards promoting the aims of nuclear non-proliferation. Operative paragraph 3 welcomes the joint statement of the five nuclear-weapon States providing security assurances to Mongolia as a contribution to implementing resolution 53/77 D.

Since the P5 statement makes reference to Security Council resolution 984 (1995) of 11 April 1995, the draft resolution requests the Security Council to take note of that statement. As in the previous resolution on this item, operative paragraph 6 invites Member States to continue to cooperate with Mongolia in taking the necessary measures to strengthen its external security and nuclear-weapon-free status, while operative paragraph 8 requests the Secretary-General and relevant United Nations bodies to continue to provide assistance to Mongolia to take the necessary measures mentioned in operative paragraph 6. Operative paragraph 9 requests the Secretary-General to report on the implementation of the resolution to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session.

I should like to underline that a spirit of goodwill, understanding and cooperation was present and felt in this Committee as well as during the consultations on the present draft, for which my delegation is deeply grateful. I should like to take this opportunity to thank all delegations for their understanding and valuable support in promoting this question. That support creates an important incentive to pursue further the noble goal of defining and strengthening Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status, as a contribution to nuclear non-proliferation and confidence-building. Bearing the above in mind, my delegation expresses the hope that the draft will be adopted without a vote or by consensus.

Mr. Antonov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation is introducing, for the consideration of the First Committee, the draft resolution entitled "Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security", document A/C.1/55/L.6.

As the Committee will be aware, Russia first put forward the initiative to consider issues of information security two years ago at the fifty-third session of the General Assembly. We proceeded from the premise that the rapid progress of technology and means of information and telecommunications is acquiring today the nature of a global information revolution which affects all areas of the life of society — international relations, politics, economics, administration, finance, science and culture. Information resources are becoming one of the most valuable elements of both national and common human heritage. At the same time, serious concern arises in connection with the potential danger that the achievements in this field could be used for purposes that are inconsistent with universal progress and with the maintenance of international peace, stability and security in compliance with the principles of the non-use or threat of the use of force, non-interference in internal affairs and respect for human rights and freedoms.

It is important in this new area, that of information, not to allow possible confrontation to develop at the international level. Such a potential threat requires preventive measures. We see the possibility of moving forward the idea of international information security on the basis of a step-by-step approach, the expansion of geography and arenas for the consideration of the problem, gradually introducing concrete provisions relating to the common interests of security and stability into subsequent United Nations resolutions and decisions of other international forums.

The unanimously adopted General Assembly resolutions of last year and earlier years indicated the existence of the problem of international information security and called for further multilateral

consideration of this problem. The draft that we are introducing at this session follows the mainstream of earlier decisions and is exclusively non-confrontational in nature, taking into account the considerations of a number of States. It states that considerable progress has been achieved in developing and applying the latest information technologies and that they influence the further progress of civilization. The preambular part calls attention to the fact that these technologies and means can potentially be used for purposes that are inconsistent with the objectives of maintaining international stability and security and may adversely affect the security of States in both the civil and military fields.

The operative part of the draft resolution contains a call to Member States to promote at multilateral levels the consideration of existing and potential threats in the field of information security, as well as consideration of possible measures to limit the threats emerging in this field. It notes that the purpose of such measures could be served through the examination of relevant international concepts aimed at strengthening the security of global information and telecommunications systems. The draft resolution suggests that all Member States should continue to inform the Secretary-General of their views and assessments on the issues of information security, basic notions related to information security, including unauthorized interference with or misuse of information and telecommunications systems and information resources, and the content of the concepts and approaches developed by States in this field.

In conclusion, I should like once more to emphasize that the Russian draft on information security does not have the goal of imposing a one-sided approach to this field, nor is it an attempt to introduce total control over information and telecommunications systems. On the contrary, it proposes to ensure democratic norms and the principle of the freedom of the mass media in the interests of civil society. The objective of the draft is to draw attention to potential threats to security that can arise as a result of the unlawful use of telecommunications systems and to allow States to express their points of view on this urgent problem. I call upon delegations to support the Russian draft, and I would like, as in previous years, that it be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): I have the honour to introduce, on behalf of the sponsors, the draft resolution entitled "Regional disarmament", contained in document A/C.1/55/L.34. At the present time, the major threats to international peace and security emanate from disputes and arms build-ups at the regional level. Many of the factors that drive regional arms races are specific to each region or subregion. To expect the realization of the goal of regional disarmament only through the adoption of global approaches is unrealistic. Global measures that lead to a more benign international environment do have a positive impact in containing regional arms races. These measures are therefore necessary but, by themselves, not sufficient to promote regional disarmament and security.

Asymmetries in defence capabilities also create the dangers of aggression and the use of force. That in turn could lead to the search for non-conventional means of self-defence and deterrence. On the other hand, conflicts and disputes in various regions also contribute to the acquisition and accumulation of armaments on a large scale, raising the possibilities for escalation and the scale of suffering in such conflicts. Regional approaches to international security, disarmament and non-proliferation have assumed special importance in the current international environment. Success or failure of security in disarmament measures in certain sensitive regions will have important regional and global impact. There have been welcome and positive trends in certain regions, but peace and disarmament have been damaged by recent developments in other regions.

We remain convinced that efforts to achieve regional disarmament must be pursued in tandem with global approaches to disarmament. They are essential to address the regional dynamics of each specific region. Initiatives to promote regional disarmament cannot be put on hold on the specious ground that only global approaches can ensure meaningful disarmament. The peoples of various regions that are burdened with increasing armaments and conflicts, cannot be told that they cannot have relief until the distant utopia of global disarmament has been achieved.

Draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.34 affirms these propositions regarding the importance of regional disarmament. It takes into account most of the guidelines for regional disarmament adopted by the Disarmament Commission in 1993. It also emphasizes that regional disarmament measures, by enhancing the security of regional States, will contribute to

international peace and security by reducing the risk of regional conflicts. The draft resolution calls on States to conclude agreements, wherever possible, for nuclear non-proliferation, disarmament and confidence-building measures at the regional and subregional levels.

The progress made towards nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones of peace in several parts of the world is a most encouraging sign of the potential of the regional approach to disarmament. Therefore the draft resolution welcomes the initiatives that have been taken by some States towards disarmament, non-proliferation and security at the regional and subregional levels and supports efforts for confidence-building measures also.

In conclusion, I should like to express, on behalf of the sponsors, our confidence that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Tóth (Hungary): I should like to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.42 and then make a statement on the same agenda item.

It is my privilege, on behalf of the sponsors, to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.42, on the Biological Weapons Convention. The following States are sponsors: Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Mongolia, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America.

In its preamble the draft resolution notes with satisfaction that there are 143 States parties to the Convention, including all the permanent members of the Security Council. It recalls the decision of the 1994 Special Conference of the States Parties to the Convention to establish an ad hoc group whose objective should be to consider appropriate measures, including possible verification measures, and draft proposals to strengthen the Convention, to be included, as appropriate, in a legally binding instrument to be submitted for the consideration of the States parties.

In its operative part the draft resolution welcomes the progress achieved so far negotiating a protocol to strengthen the Convention, and reaffirms the decision of the Fourth Review Conference urging the Ad Hoc Group to conclude negotiations as soon as possible before the commencement of the Fifth Review Conference and to submit its report, which shall be adopted by consensus, to the States parties to be considered at a special conference.

Draft resolution L.42 calls upon all States parties in this context to accelerate the negotiations and to redouble their efforts within the Ad Hoc Group to formulate an efficient, cost-effective and practical regime and seek early resolution of the outstanding issues through renewed flexibility in order to complete the protocol in accordance with the decision of the Fourth Review Conference. It notes that at the request of the States parties a Fifth Review Conference will be held at Geneva from 19 November to 7 December 2001 and that, following appropriate consultations, a preparatory committee for that conference has been formed. The draft resolution requests the Secretary-General to continue to render the necessary assistance to the depositary Governments of the Convention and to provide such services as may be required for the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the Review Conferences, including all necessary assistance to the Ad Hoc Group and the special conference which is to consider the report of the Ad Hoc Group in accordance with its mandate.

May I express the hope that draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.42, being co-sponsored by a large number of States parties to the Convention, be adopted, as previous resolutions have been traditionally, as a consensus report.

That concludes the introduction of the draft resolution, and I should now like to make a statement on the same agenda item.

The year 2000 marks important milestones of biological arms control and disarmament. The twenty-fifth anniversary of the entry into force of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the seventy-fifth anniversary of the 1925 Geneva Protocol put in the right historical and moral context the Ad Hoc Group negotiations in Geneva on the protocol to strengthen the BWC. Both dates serve as an

indisputable reminder of why there is a need to uphold the legacy of arms control and disarmament through eliminating the deficiencies of precursor arrangements. There are various ways of describing the significant progress in the Ad Hoc Group negotiations since autumn 1999. The further consolidation of the rolling text through a sustained reduction in the total number of square brackets, the engagement of delegations in serious give-and-take on the most contentious outstanding issues, and the readiness to embrace new, more flexible methods of work are all true marks of a steady advance. All these indicators, however convincing, still might be interpreted as signs of trivial progress only for the insider world of arms control bureaucrats. Is this progress real? Is there a real political expectation and support for successfully concluding the negotiations?

More than a year from now the Fifth Review Conference of States Parties to the BWC will have to take stock of biological arms control and disarmament. By that time the protocol will have to be submitted to the Special Conference for approval. It might be appropriate to look beyond the parochial reality of the Geneva negotiations for clues on what the wider political universe is anticipating in this crucial period ahead of us.

May I enumerate some clues that, in my judgement, might be relevant. The March 2000 session of the Ad Hoc Group was marked by a series of foreign-ministerial and high-level statements made on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the entry into force of the BWC, all of them emphasizing the importance of the protocol and the need for an early conclusion to the negotiations. On 24 May in the Final Communiqué of the NATO Ministerial Meeting, it was stated, "We reiterate our commitment to efforts to achieve such an instrument as soon as possible before the Fifth Review Conference of the BTWC in 2001".

On 17 June, on the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Geneva Protocol the depositary Governments issued a statement calling for the strengthening of the BWC. In his paper, President Clinton said:

> "In my 1998 State of the Union address I called on the international community to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention with a new international inspection system to help detect and deter cheating. Significant progress has been made in Geneva in the Ad Hoc Group of the BW States parties towards achieving this goal. We urge all participants in this process to work toward the earliest possible conclusion of a BWC protocol that will further strengthen international security."

President Putin in his statement said:

> "As a depositary country Russia has constantly advocated the establishment of effective arrangements for monitoring compliance with the Biological Weapons Convention and is taking an active part in the negotiations to develop a protocol to strengthen and improve the Convention."

In a statement issued on the seventy-fifth anniversary, France called on all parties to demonstrate the determination necessary to conclude these negotiations before the next review conference in 2001.

The G8 Foreign Ministers, and later the G8 heads of State and Government, addressed the issue as well. The Foreign Ministers meeting on 13 July said, "We will make the utmost efforts with others to conclude the negotiations on a Protocol which will effectively strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention as early as possible in 2001". The communiqué of the 23rd July meeting of the G8 heads of State and Government stated, "We commit ourselves with others to conclude the negotiations on the Verification Protocol ... as early as possible in 2001".

The statement following the meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum in July stated:

> "The Ministers reiterated their support for the work of the Ad Hoc Group of States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) ... on a verification protocol ... and their call for a speedy conclusion of the said negotiations."

The communiqué of the thirty-third ASEAN Ministerial Meeting noted the progress in negotiating a verification protocol to strengthen the BWC by the Ad Hoc Group of the States parties to the BWC.

Finally, the Thirteenth Ministerial Conference of the Movement of the Non-Aligned Countries, meeting in Cartagena, Colombia, reaffirmed

> "the decision of the Fourth Review Conference urging the conclusion of the negotiations by the Ad Hoc Group as soon as possible, before the commencement of the Fifth Review Conference

> ... allowing sufficient time for the steps which would need to be taken for the consideration of the outcome of the Ad Hoc Group's work at a special conference to be held prior to the BWC 2001 Review Conference."

These high-level statements, subscribed to by practically all States, great and small, north and south, east and west, are sending the same political messages: the urgency of the successful completion of the negotiations on the protocol. Now it is up to decision-makers in capitals and negotiators in Geneva to match the dedication of political leaders with an equal amount of ingenuity and devotion in order to finalize the protocol. The task is not easy, as the results of the negotiations must be acceptable individually for each and collectively for all of us. But the words of the heads of State, heads of Government and foreign ministers are loud and clear. The task can be done and is worth doing.

Mr. Sanders (Netherlands): I should like to address the First Committee on draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.42, on the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, and on the statement that Ambassador Tóth has just made.

For six years now negotiations have been proceeding in Geneva on a protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) to ensure compliance with that treaty's provisions. The Netherlands' endeavours remain fully directed towards completion of these important negotiations as soon as is practicable. Much has been achieved in the Geneva negotiations to resolve the many issues that need to be tackled if we are to strengthen the Convention. As in all negotiations, the protocol must reflect a fair bargain between the varying positions of different countries. But we would prefer more of a committal protocol than a simple bargain in which neither compliance nor cooperation objectives are met properly.

The Netherlands attaches great importance to concluding negotiations on the protocol before the Fifth Review Conference next year. We therefore fully support the efforts of the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Group, Ambassador Tóth, to reach agreement among all States parties and to conclude our negotiations in Geneva at the latest in 2001.

The Netherlands is fully committed to the negotiations on the protocol, and our candidacy for the seat of the future organization is clear testimony of that commitment. It is also the reason that we feel we have a somewhat special relationship with the negotiations. Last week we submitted a concrete and substantive bid to the friend of the Chair of the Ad Hoc Group, Ambassador Seiichiro Noboru of Japan. The Netherlands has made a very generous offer for this seat with regard to the facilities for the organization, its financial implications and privileges and immunities. My Government will take all the necessary measures so that the organization and its member States can benefit to the maximum from optimum working conditions, as well as take advantage of the presence of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in The Hague. In short, I assure the Committee that our candidacy for the future organization of the BWC will be an offer that the Committee cannot refuse.

Programme of work

The Chairman: Before adjourning this meeting I should like to inform members that for the next phase of the Committee's work — namely, action on draft resolutions — an informal paper setting out the clusters of the draft resolutions submitted this year, will be circulated to delegations tomorrow, Friday, 20 October.

The Committee will meet again on 20 October at 10 a.m. in this same room to continue its second phase of work.

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.